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Greg Christiana  
Town Meeting Moderator  
Town of Arlington

**Re: Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article 41**

Dear Moderator Christiana,

As a Town Meeting Member from Precinct 5, I am writing in support for Warrant Article 41 regarding adjustments to the parking minimums for apartment buildings in Arlington. Passing this article is a simple but powerful step that Town Meeting can take to address both housing costs and climate change. Reducing the number of parking spaces required to be provided in multi-family buildings will both reduce the cost of those buildings and open up the potential to include more housing units within the same building footprint, in support of Arlington's Housing Production Plan. This reduction will also support the promotion of sustainable transportation and reduction in car ownership and car use, in line with Connect Arlington.

One concern that has been brought up about other warrant articles, particularly regarding zoning-related articles, is a lack of study or evidence to support the proposed change in policy. Luckily, in the case of Article 41, the research and study work has been done, courtesy of the Perfect Fit Parking analysis recently completed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), which is available here: <https://perfectfitparking.mapc.org>. In addition to studying parking demand at multi-family housing around the region, this study looked specifically at six apartment buildings located in Arlington, as shown in the table below. As this data shows, none of these buildings has a parking demand that is at or over 1 parking space/dwelling unit, and in many cases, the parking demand is significantly lower. In addition, the utilization rate shows that none of the parking lots/garages at these existing buildings is full, confirming that many parking facilities have been overbuilt, in some cases based on zoning requirements.

Property Address	Parking Demand (cars/unit)	Utilization Rate (cars/parking space)
30-50 Mill Street	0.9	0.8
4105 Symmes Court	0.71	0.32
438 Massachusetts Avenue	0.96	0.85
252, 258-260 Massachusetts Avenue	0.65	0.8
924-932 Massachusetts Avenue	0.55	0.92
204 Massachusetts Avenue	0.17	0.8

If you look through the entire data set (covering close to 200 buildings), the story is similar throughout the Boston region, confirming that parking is overbuilt throughout the area, resulting in negative impacts on the environment and on the availability of housing.

There have been some concerns expressed that this article will make it difficult for the elderly or those with disabilities to have access to parking. However, all parking lots and garages in Arlington will still need to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Acts and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, which will ensure that parking is available for those who need it most acutely. In addition, this article only impacts minimum parking requirements, so building owners and developers will still be able to provide additional parking if they believe it will improve their building or make it more marketable. Although it is true (as another email noted) that the Arlington Redevelopment Board often approves parking reductions as part of their review of apartment buildings, this does not in any way make this article irrelevant. Reducing the parking minimums sends a clear message to property owners and developers regarding the Town's expectations, and it is always better when a project doesn't need to actively seek zoning relief to achieve a desired outcome. More importantly, this change in zoning could allow existing housing developments to repurpose existing space that is currently used for parking, for more productive uses such as additional housing or open space.

As a result of all of these factors, I hope that other Town Meeting members will be join me in voting for Article 41, and take an important step to promote housing and sustainability.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JEB', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Joseph E. Barr